

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith. The present After-Final Amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application and does not require further search.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-16 are currently pending. Claims 1-3 and 9-14, which are independent, are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which the Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5, 7 and 9-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,263,152 to Hisatomi, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,055,565 to Inai and in further view of European Patent No. 0858171 A2 to Yonemitsu, et al.

Claims 6 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Hisatomi, et al. in view of Inai and European Patent No. 0858171 A2 to Yonemitsu, et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,813,681 to Kanota, et al.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Hisatomi, et al. in view of Inai and European Patent No. 0858171 A2 to Yonemitsu, et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,570,837 to Kikuchi, et al.

U.S. Patent No. 6,055,565 to Inai (hereinafter, merely "Inai") is disqualified as §103 prior art to the present application under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(c). Under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(c), as amended on November 29, 1999, subject matter developed by another person, which qualifies as prior art only under one of more of subsections (e), (f) and (g) of 35 U.S.C. §102, shall not preclude patentability under §103 where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person or organization.

Inai and the present application were, at the time the present invention was made, subject to an obligation of assignment to the same organization, i.e., Sony Corporation. Such obligation is evidenced by the recording of assignment documents in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Accordingly, Inai is disqualified as prior art in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a); and thus all of the outstanding rejections based upon Inai in the above-noted Office Action are overcome.

Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 1-3 and 9-14 are patentable.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

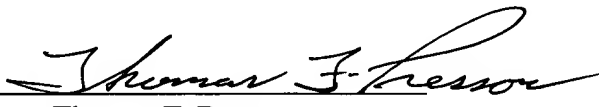
The other claims are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the above-identified reasons.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that this After-Final Amendment does not require further search and that all of the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request entry of this After-Final Response and early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
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